

Philosophy 20A – History of Ancient Greek Philosophy

Fall 2008

Mid-Term Exam Review Sheet

If you are able to answer the following questions completely and accurately, you will do quite well on the Mid-Term exam. Everything listed below can be found in either the course readings or the course lecture notes.

1. As it is characterized in the lecture notes, what is philosophy? Summarize and briefly explain the 'subject matter' and 'method' of the discipline?
2. Generally speaking, what is metaphysics? What are some of the main issues/questions that metaphysicians typically spend their time considering?
3. Generally speaking, what is epistemology? What are some of the main issues/questions that epistemologists typically spend their time considering?
4. Generally speaking, what is ethics? What are some of the main issues/questions that ethicists typically spend their time considering?
5. Generally speaking, what is logic? What are some of the main issues/questions that logicians typically spend their time considering?
6. Summarize and briefly explain the role that 'myth' played in shaping the world-view of pre-philosophical ancient Greek thought. Who were the two most important/influential Greek poets shaping ancient Greek thought? What were some of the issues/concerns that lead to
7. What was the primary difference between the way in which the poets and the Pre-Socratics attempted to account for the true nature of reality (both in terms of its origin and structure)?
8. As it has been characterized in this course, summarize and briefly explain the problem of "the One and the Many" (or 'Being and Becoming'). What are the two 'crucial questions' that the Pre-Socratics seemed to wrestle with in connection with this problem?
9. According to Thales, what is the *archē* ('source', 'ruling principle', 'stuff ') of reality? What reasons (or reasoning) seem to support his suggested *archē*? What is the principle/process of change posited by Thales that is supposed to explain/account for the many different and changing things that we encounter in the world of experience? What problems/difficulties does his account seem to face?
10. According to Anaximander, what is the *archē* ('source', 'ruling principle', 'stuff ') of reality? What reasons (or reasoning) seem to support his suggested *archē*? What is the principle/process of change posited by Anaximander that is supposed to explain/account for the many different and changing things that we encounter in the world of experience? What problems/difficulties does his account seem to face?
11. According to Anaximenes, what is the *archē* ('source', 'ruling principle', 'stuff ') of reality? What reasons (or reasoning) seem to support his suggested *archē*? What is the principle/process of change posited by Anaximenes that is supposed to explain/account for the many different and changing things that we encounter in the world of experience? What problems/difficulties does his account seem to face?
12. Despite their differences, what did all three of the Milesians seem to assume about the true nature of reality?
13. According to Heraclitus, what is the *archē* ('source', 'ruling principle', 'stuff ') of reality? What reasons (or reasoning) seem to support his suggested *archē*? What is

the principle/process of change posited by Heraclitus that is supposed to explain/account for the many different and changing things that we encounter in the world of experience? What, in Heraclitus' opinion, is the 'true nature' of reality? What illustrations/examples help to support his account? What problems/difficulties does his account seem to face?

14. According to Parmenides, what is the 'true nature' of reality? As it has been characterized in this course, summarize and briefly explain the argument that Parmenides puts forward in support of his account. What is the 'central thesis' underwriting Parmenides' reasoning? Is it a plausible thesis? What consequences are supposed to follow (logically) from the truth of the central thesis?
15. Summarize and briefly explain how Zeno sought to indirectly support the views of Parmenides against his critics. What, generally speaking, is the 'paradox of motion' supposed to show?
16. Who were the 'Pluralists' and what, generally speaking, was their philosophical 'goal'? Summarize and briefly explain the accounts put forward Anaxagoras, Empedocles and the Atomists. In what way did each of their accounts attempt to reconcile the notions of 'Being and Becoming'? What aspects of their accounts retained the basic Parmenidean requirements for being? And what aspects were supposed to be responsible for explaining change and plurality?
17. Who were the 'Sophists' and why were they (or their ideas) so infamous? As it has been characterized in this course, what three 'guiding themes' seem to be characteristic of sophistic thinking? Summarize and briefly explain some of the worries/dangers that seem to follow from these sophistic ideas.